

Structural Guidelines

Bylaws: Boards and Commissions should operate under its By-laws ratified by the City Council. All amendments to the By-laws must also be ratified by the Council.

Chairperson: A Chairperson is selected by electing one of its members to serve as presiding officer at the pleasure of the Board or Commission. The Chairperson, usually elected at the first meeting in July, serves for one full year. In the event of the Chairperson's resignation or removal, the Board or Commission is to elect another Chairperson for the unexpired term. During the temporary absence of the Chairperson, the Board or Commission should select a Chairperson pro tem to conduct the meeting.

Staff Liaison: A liaison will be assigned to provide staff assistance to the Commission or Boards as authorized by the City Council. In addition, a mechanical or personal recorder may be provided when budgeted funds are available and services are required by law or by the nature of the matters before the Commission or Board.

Agenda: The liaison prepares an agenda in advance of each meeting. Items must be submitted to the secretary within specific periods of the meeting in order to insure their placement on the agenda. Staff members are responsible for preparing supporting documents, material and general information to the Board or Commission with their agenda in advance of all meetings. Decisions requiring a first-hand knowledge of the physical site or location of an item on the agenda and may require a field inspection by the members prior to making a decision. An agenda "template" is included in the Appendix.

Minutes: Written minutes taken for all meetings and approved by the Board, Commission or Committee becomes the official record of its activities. Any additions or corrections to the minutes may be made in public meetings, with the approval of the Board or Commission, but not at an individual's request. Approved minutes are to be placed on the City's web site and copies to interested parties. A document entitled "Guidelines to Preparing Minutes" and Minutes "template" are included in the Appendix.

Parliamentary Procedure: Parliamentary rules of procedure help to expedite the transaction of business in an orderly fashion at meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings of Boards and Commissions. These rules may be suspended by two-thirds vote of the total membership.

Motions: If you wish to place an idea before the other members for consideration, you may do so in the form of a motion. A motion requires the following steps:

- a. You ask to be recognized by the Chairperson.
- b. After being recognized, you make the motion (e.g., "I move...").
- c. Another member seconds the motion (otherwise, the motion dies).
- d. The Chairperson states the motion and asks for discussion.
- e. When the Chairperson feels that there has been enough discussion, he closes the debate (e.g. "Are you ready for the question?").
- f. If no one asks for permission to speak, the Chairperson then puts the question to a vote.
- g. After the vote, the Chairperson announces the decision.

The member making the motion may re-phrase or withdraw it. The consent of the second is required. The motion can then be considered withdrawn. If another member wants to make the same motion, they can do so. If the Chair and the maker of the motion feels the motion is unclear, the maker advises the Chair to rephrase the motion and the Chair typically agrees.

A parliamentary procedure booklet is included in the Appendix.

Voting:

- Quorum: A majority of the members of the Board or Commission shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of routine business.
- Abstaining from Voting: Matters will occasionally come before the Board or Commission in which you may have a direct or indirect financial interest. When this happens, you must disqualify yourself from participating in the deliberations and must abstain from voting. An explanation of why you are abstaining is in order, and the Chairperson will then direct that the minutes state that you "stepped down" from the discussion and abstained from voting. Information literature entitled "Can I Vote" prepared by the State's Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) is included in the appendix.
- Conflict of Interest: It is illegal for any member of a Board or Commission to have an interest in any contract sale, purchase or transaction in which the member is involved in an official capacity. You should seek the advice of the City Attorney in any case where there is a possibility of a conflict of interest.

Subcommittees: The Chairperson has the right to appoint special committees (comprised of less than a quorum of the body) to work on a specific item and report periodically back to the full body.